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ABSTRACT

During the post-World War II era, the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union became strained. Both countries feared that one would target the other with atomic warheads placed on missiles. Fear of a nuclear holocaust occupied the thinking of many people as they went about their daily activities. As a member of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EX-COMM) during President John F. Kennedy's administration, you (the student) are familiar with these fears that U.S. security could be so compromised or even lost by the presence of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) in the hands of enemies and possibly targeted at U.S. cities. Today, October 16, 1962, you receive a memo from the President's office that a U-2 airplane flyover has provided aerial photographs of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Your task is to advise President Kennedy about an appropriate and effective U.S. response to the apparent Soviet missile installation in Cuba. Your duty is to prepare a policy brief with recommendations for U.S. reaction to the news from the U-2 airplane. A policy brief contains background information to support a particular position which you recommend to the President. This activity plan outlines the process for implementing the task; provides an extensive resource list; gives learning advice; discusses evaluation; and presents reflection and conclusion questions. The teacher notes give grade level/unit; discuss California history/social studies standards; state a lesson purpose; suggest length of class periods; and list teacher resources. The plan also outlines detailed teaching steps and suggests lesson extensions. Contains two student handouts. (BT)

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Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

"To Be . . . Or Not To Be:" The U.S. Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis

Eleventh Grade Activity
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http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/tobeornot/

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"TO BE... OR NOT TO BE:"

THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Introduction

During the post-World War II era, the relationship between the former Allies and now superpowers--th States and the Soviet Union--has grown increasingly strained. Both countries fear that the other will tar enemy with atomic warheads placed on missiles and perhaps launch those weapons at the slightest prov American civilians are engaged in sky watching to provide warning that missiles are on the way. Schoo are taught to "duck and cover" to "protect" themselves from an attack. The generation born in the late 1 in the 1950s has become known as the first atomic or nuclear generation. Fear of a nuclear holocaust oc thinking of many people as they go about their daily activities. Some individuals and families even are l costly fallout shelters in cellars or backyards.

As a member of EX-COMM, the Executive Committee of the National Security Council during Preside Kennedy's Administration, you are very familiar with these fears that United States' security could be s compromised or even lost by the presence of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) in the hands o "enemies" and possibly targeted at U.S. cities. Now that the 1960s have arrived, you have noticed that international incidents such as the seizure of the government of Cuba by Fidel Castro, The Bay of Pigs

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the construction of the Berlin Wall seem to be occurring frequently. Today, the morning of October 16, you receive the following memo (SEE PAGE 2). It, together with the rumors circulating in Washington convince you that something very significant is afoot.

See teacher notes.

Office of the President of the United States

Washington, D.C.

Date: 16 October, 1962

To: Members of EX-COMM

From: ftp://ftp.micro.caltech.edu/pub/PresidentJohnF.Kennedy

Re: Meetings today (1:00 pm) and this evening (7:00 pm)

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY.

Clear your calendars to handle crisis situation in progress. Aerial photographs of U-2 flyover Cul provide compelling evidence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Incident is highly classified. Imperative tl secrecy be maintained. Refer to attached memo. [Student Handout #2]

Declassified January 15, 1989, this document reveals details of a proposed overthrow of Castro.

http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/publications/cmc/cmcdoc1.html

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The Task

You are a member of EX-COMM, the Executive Committee of the U.S. National Security Council (NC including members of the upper echelon of the intelligence community. Your task is to advise Presiden about an appropriate and effective U.S. response to the apparent Soviet missile installations in Cuba. Tl President will address the nation and the world on Monday, October 22, 1962, revealing the existence o Soviet missile capacity in Cuba and detailing the U.S. response. Your duty is to prepare a **policy brief** your recommendations for the U.S. reaction to the U2's news. A policy brief contains background infor support a particular position which you will recommend to the President. Time is of the essence and yo the best job of researching your areas of expertise as possible.

[Meeting of Ex-COMM 18, October, 1962.]Source: The National Security Archives. Reprinted with permission.]

The Process

Your teacher will facilitate the allocation of specific roles that students in your class will play on EX-C

You may have one or more researchers assist you in the preparation of a brief. You will read from this b important meeting, or possibly a series of meetings, in which you make the President aware of the resul research.

You and the other members of EX-COMM will present your briefs to President Kennedy on October 2(Following this presentation, there will be a debate on the primary and secondary issues involved in draf U.S. response to the potential missile threat. Remember that the possibility of nuclear war is very real. overall question you must answer as a committee member and that the entire committee must consider i

How great a threat does the presence of Soviet missiles off the coast of the U.S. pose?

Below are the steps you should take to accomplish this task.

For specific requirements the brief must meet, see Student Handout #2 which is at the end of the section of this lesson.

[Please be aware that your teacher is merely another resource and will not resolve the problem for you.]

1. **Meet as a large group--the EX-COMM**. This committee is chaired by John F. Kennedy, to discuss and list the information you need to know to properly address the task. Since there is not enough time (2 days) for each member of Ex-COMM to research everything, it will be necessary each member to do a piece of the research.

For instance:

- What events have occurred between the Soviet Union and the U.S. in recent years?
- How do these events shed light on the current crisis?
- What do the U-2 reconnaissance photos look like and how solid is this evidence?

Then, EX-COMM will discuss the kinds of information that each member of EX-COMM brings to the table. Include the information in your brief statements of the question involved in th crisis. You should expect your perceptions of the question to change as more information becom available. This listing of **Need-to-know Questions** will form the first page(s) of your brief.

2. **Conduct your research**. Use both the Internet and/or library resources. Refer to the list of resources in the next section. Include a References page at the end of your brief. [Hint: one perso on your team can begin writing the brief while another is researching. This organization will save you time.

3. **Outline, then write your brief**. Remember, you are arguing for an historical position from a particular point of view. Provide evidence (support) for your point of view. Supply a copy of you completed brief to each EX-COMM member.

4. **Participate in a debate**. Ex-COMM will agree on a problem statement and then have a debate

the possible responses to the problem.

5. **Vote on a final recommendation to the President**. This vote should be on the best brief or combination of briefs.

6. **Organize and write the speech that the President will give to the nation on October 22, 19**

7. Create a rubric for scoring (along with the teacher) each person/group's brief.

8. **Score each brief**. Turn in comments on grade to teacher.

Resources

The following World Wide Web addresses will provide you with detailed and useful information to get started. Remember that your research time is limited and that you may use search engines such as Yaho AltaVista to locate specific information beyond what is provided below.

General on-line introductory information about the crisis:

http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/days/index.html

A brief summary of the crisis.

http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/briefing/index.html

A review of the beginning of the crisis.

http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/cuba_mis_cri.html

An introduction, chronology, selected glossary, documents, and much more on the crisis.

Information about Ex-COMM:

http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/people/ex-comm.html

A brief introduction to **EX-COMM**.

Bibliography of primary and secondary sources

http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/days/references.html

Photo-reconnaissance information

http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/recon/recon_room.html

On-line information to start researching EX-COMM Members:

- McGeorge Bundy

  http://cyberschool.4j.lane.edu/People/Faculty/JaggerA/StudentPublishing/Reflections/Jagger/Cor

- Lyndon Johnson

  http://austin.citysearch.com/E/E/AUSTX/0000/02/73/cs1.html

- John Kennedy

  http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/people/j_kennedy.html

- Robert Kennedy

  http://hyperion.advanced.org/11046/people/r_kennedy.html

- Robert McNamara

  http://members.aol.com/kwiersma/excomm/r_mcnamara.html

- Dean Rusk

  http://members.aol.com/kwiersma/excomm/dean_Rusk.html

- Adlai Stevenson

  http://members.sol.com/kwiersma/excomm/a_stevenson.html

- John McCone

  http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/history.learn-teach/coldwar.htm

  Contains CIA Database information.

Brief Manual Search Bibliography

Kennedy, Robert F. Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis, New York, 1969.

McAuliffe, Mary S., ed. **CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962.** Washington, D.C., CIA, 1992.

Medland, William J. **The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Needless or Necessary?** N.Y. Praeger, 1988.

Scali, John. **I Was the Secret Go-Between in the Cuban Missile Crisis..**

Family Weekly, October 25, 1964.

Learning Advice

1. This activity is intended to allow you to simulate high-level government decision-making duri crisis. You will learn much about team crisis-management, nuclear warheads and nuclear threats, damage control using careful writing and speaking, constructing a logical and cohesive argument and problem-solving.

2. Each EX-COMM member must remain focused on the central issue: Is the placement of Sovie missiles in Cuba a real threat to U.S. security?

3. Keep in mind that there is a deadline and that research time on the computer during class time limited. Access to the Internet outside of class would be very helpful.

4. Careful use of words and ideas must dominate your brief and your presentation/debate to the committee.

5. Your opinion means very little unless it is supported with solid evidence/reasoning.

6. If you are new to the Internet, and especially to computers, ask questions of teammates who ha some of this knowledge.

7. Your teacher is also playing a role in this simulation--the role of observer/coach/advisor. Feel f to ask for help, especially with the Internet, but not for solutions.

Evaluation

1. Your teacher may use the following methods to assess both the processes you use to solve this proble products of your efforts:

- daily observation of committee work through the use of checklists to gain data on your group pro all times you should treat members of your group with respect.
- occasional examination of student efforts in brief preparation or speech writing.
- use of class-developed rubric during Ex-Comm meeting.
- application of rubric to final products such as the
    - brief, and/or
    - President's speech, and/or
    - class discussions, and/or
    - notes or journal writing

2. The Ex-COMM will develop a rubric to evaluate each member's (or team's) contribution to advising President. The students in the class will also use the rubric to assess each team's contribution to the fina President Kennedy's speech. The rubric will contain these criteria: *historical research, historical empat commitment, communication, and problem-solving.*

Reflection

Now that we have simulated this most difficult period in history, it is time to reflect on our experience a Ex-COMM member and to write some notes for our memoirs. (As your research has probably revealed, Ex-COMM members have published their memories of these significant events.) As you make notes or journal (you may do this each evening during the simulation if you wish), consider these points:

- Describe the sequence of events during the last two weeks of October, 1962, in as much detail as
- Describe the quality and quantity of your contribution to the team effort.
- What aspects of this simulation might have been done better? Explain how.
- Identify several resources that helped you the most and explain why.
- What should the people of the U.S. learn from this event? Why?

Conclusion

You undoubtedly have a much clearer understanding of the Cuban Missile Crisis, national crisis manag and the nuclear threat. How do you think the world today is similar to October, 1962? How do you think world is different? What might have happened had Kennedy and EX-COMM's response been different? What steps should governments and individuals take to avoid a nuclear holocaust?

Student Handout #1

Teachers, print the document at the following website as Handout #1:
Document Attached or find at:

http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/publications/cmc/cmcdoc1.html

Student Handout #2

THE WHITE HOUSE

United States of America

Date: October 18, 1962

To: EX-COMM Members

From: McGeorge Bundy

Re: Cuba Brief

Your brief for President Kennedy should contain, but not be limited to the following items:

1. Background information from your perspective and relevant to the crisis at hand.

2. Your rating of the severity of the crisis and a rationale for your rating. Use a scale of 1 to 10, w being the most severe crisis imaginable.

3. Specific recommendations to the President in the following areas:

a. damage control;

b. communication of the U.S. position to our allies;

c. dealing with the rest of the world;

d. dealing with Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviet Union.

e. our response to the evidence of Soviet missile sites in Cuba.

4. Include a Need-to-Know page and include various statements of the problem.

5. Include a reference page, using APA or MLA style.

6. Length of the entire brief should be no longer than 5 pages.

Teacher Notes

Grade level/Unit:

Grade 11 The Cold War section of the **California Framework**

Standards:

Draft H/SS Standards: Grade 11 Students analyze and explain the multiple, and sometimes conflicting, effects of Unites States foreign policy in the 20th century and its impact on the home front with emphas causes and effects of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Lesson purpose:

Students will simulate or at least complete some research on one of the most important two-week perio American History. If they participate in the EX-COMM meetings to hammer out the U.S. response to t placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba, students will understand the background and causes of the event experience team building, crisis management, and doing research using both electronic and manual res

Length:

Five to eight (5-8) **class periods** of research and **4** class periods to simulate EX-COMM's meetings/debates/creation of speech for Kennedy. Varying the team configuration from one committee members having research aides to multiple EX-COMMs will alter the time allotments needed. If studen some or all of their research outside of class, the research time would be unnecessary. The number of a may also be changed in order to alter the time constraints. This process could also be shortened to **two** students research out of class and if only the EX-COMM debate is performed.

Teacher Resources

- **JFK Lesson 11**

  http://members.aol.com/kwiersma/jfk_speech.html

  This webpage provides two additional lessons on the Cuban Missile Crisis.

- **The Cuba Project**

http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/nsa/publications/cmc/cmcdoc1.html

- **Kennedy's Speech to the American People**

  http://members.aol.com/kwiersma/jfk_speech.html

  Show this to the students after the simulation if you want them to see what JFK really said to the American people and the world on October 22, 1962.

- **The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Game of Nuclear Chess**

  http://wmc.car.md.us/HTML/agesAcademics/History/cuban.html

  This site has many links to related resources. A well-organized resource.

- **Cold War Hot Links**

  http://www..stmartin.edu/~dprice/cold.war.html

  This site has many topics on the crisis with links to many other sites. It is user friendly.

- **The Missiles of October** is a made-for-television drama of the actual EX-COMM meetings durir crisis. It may be shown before or after the simulation or be assigned as homework and/or extra cr

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Teaching Steps:

Introduction/Probing Students' Knowledge

1. Teacher asks class to imagine the most horrible crisis the world might face. A nuclear holocaust shou suggested by the students. Allow them to express their fears and to separate what they know about such from what they do not know. Narrow discussion to the idea of a nuclear threat/end-of-world scenario. H class consider how a government crisis management team might try to avert such a crisis. Focus discuss the necessary attributes of such a team: *personality characteristics, knowledge, being a team player, an*

2. Move discussion toward the history of nuclear threat. Students should be familiar with the concept of War, the origins of the superpowers, communism and the Red Scare. Because this unit is problem-solvi do not go into detail about the specific events which lead to the Cuban Missile Crisis (such as the Bay c Students should discover this information during the unit.

3. Read the **Introduction** and **The Task** together. These are the first two sections of the unit.

4. The student resources mentioned above are fairly equal beginning places for the students so they sho encouraged to start with them. Other resources are provided to you below.

Assign Students to Groups

1. Because any class probably has students with a wide range of knowledge and abilities, groups should be formed by the teacher. Take time to learn about student computer knowledge and usag the World Wide Web. At least one person in each group must be able to use Netscape Navigator Explorer to get around the Web. Simply playing with the Web is very different from doing resear on-line. Students may teach themselves much of this knowledge while doing this project, but the will not be efficient immediately. Help them increase their ability to hit the needed targets by providing instruction in keyword and phrase searching. Encourage students to take the time to re the search instructions that each engine requires. Try to ensure that they begin with the URLs (th addresses of pages and websites) that are provided in the unit.

2. Also try to place students with learning/language deficiencies with more capable students.

3. Decide which roles you will have students enact. As many as 21 roles are possible and in keep with the actual EX-COMM. For a complete list of the historical persons on EX-COMM see http://cyberschool.4j.lane.edu/people/faculty/Jaggera/StudentPublishing/Reflections/Jagger/conte

4. Emphasize the team-playing aspects of the effort.

Develop Rubric with Students:

1. Use the criteria listed in the student portion of the unit: historical research, historical empathy, task commitment, communication, and problem-solving..

2. Ask them to use a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being the lowest point and 4 the highest. It is often eas to work from the extremes toward the middle. So, ask them to suggest what a student would do t earn a 4 for historical research. Focus on products since interior motivation cannot be observed a therefore evaluated by others.

3. Doing this step, though it will take some time, will most likely produce a higher quality product/performance than skipping it.

Conduct or Supervise the Initial EX-COMM Meeting:

1. See student instructions in the Process section of this unit.

2. Be sure students have a provisional but clear understanding of what the problem is and what th need to know.

Conduct or Supervise the U.S. Response Debate:

1. Remind students, if necessary, that this is a critical team effort and not a competition to be "the

best".

2. Help students to create a speech that is appropriate to the 1960s and that contains a clear Ameri response to the crisis.

3. Help the students work out an efficient way to write the speech their JFK will give.

Debrief:

1. Use the questions in the Reflection and Conclusion sections of this unit to discuss what studen learned in terms of historical content and in terms of crisis management and team process.

2. Have them write their reflections in a journal if you wish.

Information Literacy Skills

Students should have some computer literacy skills before attempting this unit or they will waste too m valuable time learning to do the research component.

The teacher should alert the librarian to make available materials on this topic.

Specific skills addressed include

- defining a problem;
- planning a research strategy or strategies;
- judging the quality of information/resources located;
- organization of information into a position;
- creation of an argument or series of reasons to back up a position;
- use of information for persuasive purposes.

Lesson Extensions

The following suggestions can be done by the entire class, by different groups, as extra credit or a make-up assignments for students absent during the simulation. They can be an addition to the simulation or can be performed afterward.

- Have students conduct an oral history interview with one or more people who were of various ag this crisis. It is important to instruct students in proper oral history techniques.
- Have individuals or groups research the responses of other than intelligence community and/or governmental individuals and report to the class.
- See the SCORE 10th grade Unit , *World War II and its Consequences. after it is posted on the W mirror unit on the international responses of countries or individuals to the crisis.*
- Have the class discuss how a crisis like this, if it occurred today, ***would be similar or different.***

Credits

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